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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
"FÊTES GALANTES," A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS
OF MICHEL BLAVET'S SONATA OP.II, NO.1 IN G MAJOR,
"L'HENRIETTE," FOR FLUTE AND BASS
by
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ABSTRACT

The subject of this essay is an analysis of the first of six sonatas for flute and bass Op.II by Michel Blavet (1700-1768). Entitled "L'Henriette," the sonata reflects Blavet's thorough assimilation of the compositional practices of his time--practices substantially different from the older Baroque methods.

The first part of this essay will survey some of the social conditions in France that led to the establishment of a style of music known as galant, or rococo. A discussion of the technical aspects of the music is also undertaken, supported by tables and examples.

The second part of the essay opens with a brief biography of the composer followed by the stylistic analysis of the sonata through its four movements. Throughout, the issues of form, melody, harmony, rhythm and ornamentation are examined in the light of the sonata's rococo setting.

Blavet's contribution to the art, and final observations about the composer, his music, and style, conclude the essay.

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I

INTRODUCTION

The late Baroque era in France was an odd state-of-affairs with nearly every significant artistic endeavour manacled to the totalitarian regime. Louis XIV's greatest concern lay in establishing a totally Gallic culture, and he appointed Jean-Baptiste Lully to oversee virtually every important musical affair at court and beyond.

Technical matters were Lully's to consider, but the artistic taste and temperament--the cultural barometer--was generated by the court in which Lully worked. The visual arts fared no better under the thumb of Charles Le Brun, who supervised the painters, architects and sculptors of his time.

Lully's somewhat untimely death on March 22, 1687, lifted musical France from its restraints. The tragédies lyriques soon dissolved after Lully's demise, and following the "Sun King's" death in September 1715, music took a different tack from the previously held ideals.¹

1 Reinhard G. Pauly, Music in the Classic Period (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965), p.15.

Works called galant ries appeared from the pens of the keyboard composers. Among the works of Fran ois Couperin, for example, there is a piece entitled "La Galante" which has a very thin texture, simple homophony, and a pleasant tune with much embellishment (see example 1).²

Ex. 1: "La Galante"



It was the taste for music such as this that we call galant.³ Form over substance, (icing, rather than the cake itself), and mannerism surpassed the old style grave and the Doctrine of the Affections.⁴ The Regency saw music

2 Fran ois Couperin, "La Galante," as quoted by Carl Parish and John J. Ohl, eds., Masterpieces of Music Before 1750 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1951), pp.169-171.

3 Daniel Heartz, "Galant," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, sixth edn., ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols., (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), VII, pp.92 and 93.

4 Pauly, Music in the Classic Period, pp.20 and 21.

becoming a gentler, more sentimental and socially polite art form with a high degree of ornamentation.

Rococo is the term most widely used to describe that style of French art of the period from approximately 1700 to 1750. The term stems from rocaille, a style of rock work that was highly figured, small, delicate, and with an occasional affinity for the asymmetrical.⁵ This style found its way into music from painting, especially from certain works by Antoine Watteau depicting scenes of carefree bourgeois indulgence.

The new age of elegance, ornament, and polite mannerism was made manifest by the "Sun King's" successor, Louis XV. Although the social and political structure remained largely intact, works commissioned by Louis XV were held mostly as an observance to tradition.⁶ Music took a radical turn from its once lofty position; in fact, had it not been for the nobility and the efforts of Madame de Pompadour, gatherings such as the Concerts Spirituels, founded in 1725, might not have survived at all.⁷

5 Pauly, Music in the Classic Period, p.12.

6 James Breck Perkins, France Under Louis XV, 2 vols., (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1904), Vol.I, pp.10 ff.

7 James R. Anthony, "Paris," New Grove, V., p.206, ii. See also

Pierre Constant, Histoire du Concert Spirituel 1725-1790, (Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, Heugel et Cie, 1975).

Through the Concerts Spirituels, music found a refuge in Paris, sheltered by a nobility desperately clinging to any vestiges of authority and esteem. Found redundant in an age of absolutism, the noble houses set about creating their own systems of courtly privilege, helping to further the implosion of style from the grand to the intimate.⁸ To make matters worse, France's severely antiquated economy and methods of taxation restrained musical projects on the colossal scale; these funds were channeled into the everlasting wars against England, and the Huguenots at home.⁹

This new era of intimacy, sentiment and mannerism found one of its greatest representatives in Michel Blavet (1700-1768). The first sonata ("L'Henriette") from a set of six he published in Paris in 1732 (Op.II) is a typical example of the musical "fêtes galantes " that were apparently so popular in Blavet's time. This sonata forms the basis of the stylistic analysis in Part Two of this paper.

8 Perkins, France Under Louis XV, pp.34-36.

9 Duke of St. Simon, Memoirs of Louis XIV and the Regency, 3 vols., trans. by Bayle St. John, (Akron, Ohio: St. Dunstan Society, 1901), Vol.I, XXXVI, pp.369 ff, and XXXVIII, pp.288 ff.

For further reading see

Perkins, France Under Louis XV, pp.1-47 and 64-86.

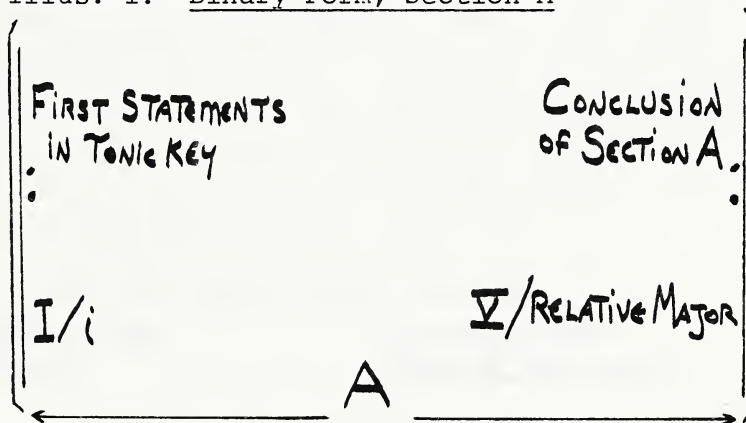
TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE ROCOCO

The era of the rococo, style galant, or style régence is often referred to by philosophers and historians as the Age of Enlightenment, a secular and highly individualistic phase within the arts. The way in which an individual reacted and felt from moment-to-moment under a variety of given stimuli and situations became an important issue. Composers nevertheless recognised a need for established molds, a common vehicle by which they could express their sentiments and thus give music a cultural focus. Just as two centuries later, jazz (perhaps the most personal and diverse of music forms) found its multi-faceted expressive path through the common denominator of the simple blues progression, so did the composers and players during the Regency utilise a simple mold--the binary form.

BINARY FORM

Binary structure consists of two balancing sections ("A" and "B"). Section A presents the foremost ideas of the movement in the tonic key and concludes in the dominant if the movement is in the major mode. If the movement is in a minor key, the first section will commonly close in the relative major key. In a simple diagram, this form can be described as follows (see illustration 1):

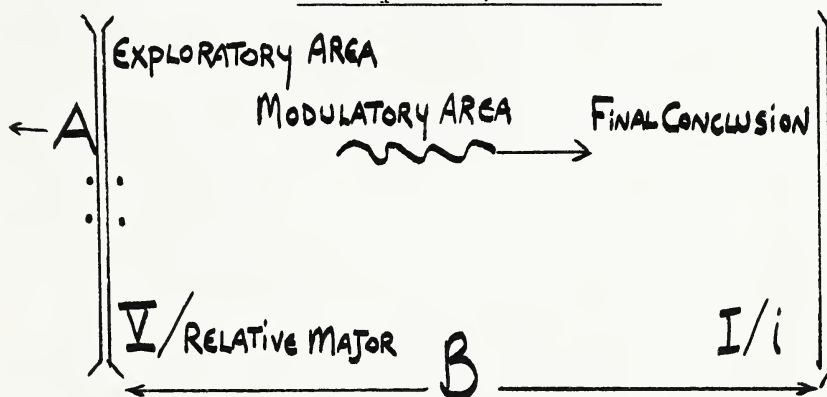
Illus. 1: Binary Form, Section A



The B section is the area of exploration outside the tonic key, and it is here that modulation plays an important role. The maintenance of interest in the movement and technical considerations (such as melodic voice leading) is carried out by modulatory means, and tonality is confined to the nearest key relationships.

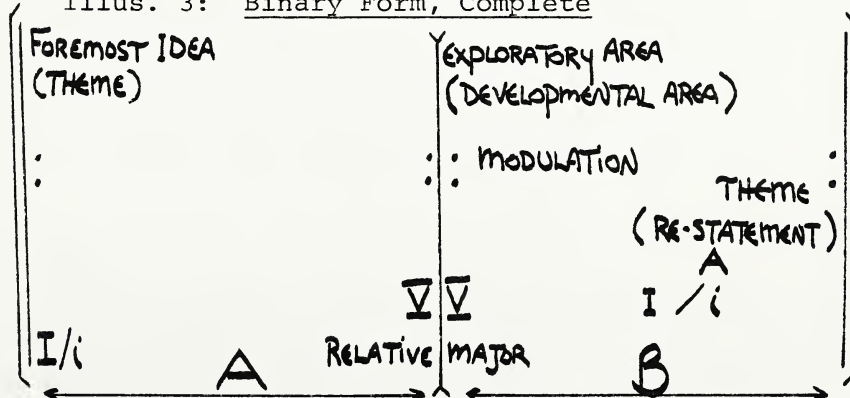
One of the fundamental principles of tonality is the demand for an ultimate resolution and conclusion of musical exploration. To create this sense of fulfillment, the piece is brought back to its home key (see illustration 2).

Illus. 2: Binary Form, Section B



This section is also repeated. At the close of Section B, opening ideas are often re-stated, sometimes literally, as a unifying device. The structure in completion is (see illustration 3):

Illus. 3: Binary Form, Complete



Where the need to solidify a return to the tonic key has caused a complete re-statement of Section A, the AB binary form is modified into a ternary structure AB + A, or ABA. It is this structural arrangement of presenting ideas in various established dance rhythms that we recognise as the suite.

THE SUITE

The favoured medium for the performance of intimate music was the suite, a collection of dance forms found both in France and abroad. Along with the French bourée, courante, menuet, and rondeau, came the chaconne, gigue, passacaglia, and sarabande from foreign sources.¹⁰ That this was indeed a new age, one of cosmopolitan tastes, can be determined by the acceptance of these foreign influences within the established formal structures. The primary aid for determining the character of a stylized dance movement from this period lies in the style, choreography and particularly the tempo of the dance type when actually used for the dance. Although dance movements do have characteristic rhythms and tempi, description of them varies from author to author. Notwithstanding this, Ralph Kirkpatrick has compiled a list of tempi comparing certain writers' ideals (see Table of Tempo Markings, p.10).¹¹

10 See Richard Hudson, "Chaconne," New Grove, IV, pp.100-102; Meredith Ellis Little, "Gigue," Ibid., VII, pp.368-370; Richard Hudson, "Passacaglia," Ibid., XIV, pp.267-270; Hudson, "Sarabande," Ibid., XVI, pp.489-493.

11 Papers of the American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Dec. 29-30, 1938, as quoted by Curtis W. Coffee, "The Sonatas for Flute and Bass of Michel Blavet," (Ph.D., Boston, 1964), pp.45 and 46.

TABLE I
TEMPO MARKINGS

<u>Movement</u>	<u>Quantz</u>	<u>L'Affilard</u>	<u>Lachappelle</u>	<u>D'Ongembray</u>	<u>Choquel</u>
<u>Allemande</u>			$2/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 120$		
<u>Gavotte</u>	$C \text{ } \text{♩} = 120-132$	$2/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 120$	$2/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 152$	$2/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 97$	$2/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 126$
<u>Sarabande</u>	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 80$	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 86$ $3/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 72$ $6/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 133$	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 63$	$3/2 \text{ } \text{♩} = 73$	
<u>Menuet</u>	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 160$	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 70$	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 126$	$3/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 70$	$6/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 80$
<u>Gigue</u>	$6/8 \text{ } \text{♩} = 160$	$6/8 \text{ } \text{♩} = 100$ $3/8 \text{ } \text{♩} = 116$	$6/4 \text{ } \text{♩} = 120$	$6/8 \text{ } \text{♩} = 112$	$6/8 \text{ } \text{♩} = 104$

Michel Corrette writes about the pulse within the measure:

The measure of four beats...is beaten
in two different ways; to wit, in the
Allegro always once (up and down):
and in the Adagio or other slow
pieces, twice if you so desire.¹²

Donington's overview of various authors' remarks about tempo notes that the allemande was of two kinds--one, light and airy, and the other in a more sombre mood. Gavottes, rigaudons, and tambourins, are all of a cheerful nature.¹³

Quantz notes that the sarabande

...has the same movement, but is played
with a somewhat more agreeable execution.¹⁴

Also, after Quantz, the menuet

...is played springily, the crotchets
being marked with a rather heavy, but
still short, bow-stroke...¹⁵

It is interesting to note that body pulse was a method for determining dance rhythms, and in the case of the menuet

12 Michel Corette, Méthode pour apprendre aisement à jouer de la flûte traversière (Paris-Lyons: Boivin, 1739; reprint facsimile, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1975), p.4.

13 Robert Donington, The Interpretation of Early Music, New Version, (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p.393 ff.

14 Johann Joachim Quantz, Essay of a Method for Playing the Transverse Flute, trans. by E.R. Reilly (London: Faber and Faber, 1966). p.291.

15 Ibid.

Quantz remarks that it is played

...with a pulse beat on two crotchets.¹⁶

Regarding the gigue, Quantz says

...if written in six-eight time, there is a pulse beat on each bar...,

and the bowing called for is short and crisp.¹⁷

Préludes are not listed among the dance tempi, although like the toccata, they were originally free improvisations almost imperceptibly started by the player to check intonation, loosen the fingers, familiarise himself with the key, and prepare the listeners for the music yet to come. As the prélude acquired some established artistic form of its own, it became increasingly tied to time and measure.¹⁸

François Couperin tells us,

Although these preludes are written in measured time, there is nevertheless a style, dictated by custom, which must be observed. A prelude is a free composition in which the imagination gives free rein to any fancy that may present itself. But as it is rather rare to find geniuses able of production on the spur of the moment, those who have recourse to these non-improvised preludes should play them in a free, easy style, not

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Donington, Early Music, p.426.

sticking too closely to the exact time,
 unless I have expressly marked it by the
 word mesuré (measured time).¹⁹

It would seem that the practices of tempo, outside the established traditions of dance movements, and involving the "freely played" entrées were the results of the whims of the players.

Of the foreign influences involving form, it was the Italian violin sonata that made a great impact upon the Gallic culture. The music of Vivaldi in particular seems to have excited the French composers.²⁰ Couperin quickly grasped the Italian form, but strove to combine the best elements of French and Italian music as represented by Lully and Corelli.²¹

As will be noted, in keeping with the tradition of labeling his movements with picturesque titles, Michel Blavet also added Italian tempo indications.

Blavet applied traditional French titles to his

19 François Couperin, L'Art de toucher le Clavecin, Paris, 1716, ed. of 1717, trans. and ed. by Mevanwy Roberts, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1961), p.33.

20 William S. Newman, The Sonata in the Baroque Era, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959, rev. ed. 1966), p.367.

21 François Reguenet, "Parallels des Italiens et des Français" (1702), in Oliver Strunk, ed., Source Readings in Music History, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1950), p.478.

works, but the contents are modeled closely after Corelli's Opus 5.²²

Although Blavet retains elements of the French suite, he does not allow his works to become abstract collections of small, stylised dance pieces.

Both the suite and the sonata da camera feature movements in the same key. Blavet has chosen this harmonically unifying device in his sonata Op.II, No.1, "L'Henriette," although the second aria is presented in the parallel minor key.

22 Neal Zaslaw, "Michel Blavet," New Grove, II, p.787.

MELODIC CONSTRUCTION

Certainly one of the most outstanding features of the galant style (especially regarding the works for solo instruments) is the presence of a highly ornate melodic line. Also, an arrangement of regular phrases of usually eight and sixteen bars incorporating thematic statements of four- and sometimes two- bar fragments differs significantly from the older Fortspinnung technique (see examples 2 and 3).

Ex. 2: "Adagio."²³



23 Joseph Bodin de Boismortier, "Adagio," Sixieme Suite, Op.35, No.6, Pour Flûte Solo, ed. par Pierre Paubon, (Paris: Gérard Billaudot, 1979).

Ex. 3: "Presto."²⁴

An uncovering of the ornamental galant mantle often reveals a pleasant tune, or polite "dialogue"²⁵ between the players themselves, and with the audience. The concept of a dialogue of simple tunes again differs from the sometimes abstract quality of the Baroque style. Also, the galant melody sees a frequent use of finely divided arpeggios and scale passage-work. Sequential patterns, the echo, triplet figuring and suspensions also help to establish the mannerisms of the new style.

The melody may often be propelled by dotted rhythms of various kinds. Not surprisingly, the net result on paper shows a resemblance to the current taste for

24 J.S. Bach, "Presto," Sonata No.1, G Minor for Unaccompanied Violin, from Bach-Gesellschaft Edition, (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1950), p.8.

25 See J.R. Anthony, French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), pp.84-87, and John Whenham, "Dialogue," New Grove, V, pp.418 and 419.

architecture; the graphics present a dense forest of turns, runs, and arabesque-like trills winding around a rather simple tune.

There exists, however, much music that at first sight seems barren indeed. The frequent use of long note-values and the simplest of rhythmic propellants seem to contradict the ornamental style of the rococo.

Two methods of actually writing down the melody prevail. One of them has the composer writing down the attitudes, mannerisms, and galantéries which readily identify the style. The other method presents the player with only a sparse melodic layout. For the performer well versed in his musical etiquette, the unadorned, simple structure offered the greatest scope of individual expression within the realm of polite dialogue. The ability to sustain this style thus requires a thorough understanding of ornamental practice.

ORNAMENTATION

The French composers for the flute and violin in particular were sometimes less careful about indicating the method of performing ornaments than were the clavecinists, indicating merely by a small cross (+) the note to be ornamented. Unfortunately, this sign could have been interpreted in any number of ways, and players from this era were expected to divine the appropriate realisation of this somewhat arcane hieroglyph from its musical context.²⁶ Such is the problem for modern scholars faced with "decoding" music of this age.

All performers of this kind of music today recognize that ornaments are an obligatory part of the texture. Many editions today have, in fact, already "decoded" the signs and present the ornaments in their "written out" manner.

Hotteterre's list of ornaments includes two that are indispensable in performance practice. These are the

²⁶ See Freillon-Poncein and Hotteterre le Romain, Preludes for Solo Treble Recorder, ed. by Betty Bang and David Lasocki (London: Faber, 1968), p.1.

cadential trill with preparation (see Table II, p.20), and the appoggiatura (see Table II, p.20), both indicated by a cross.²⁷

Regarding the mordent, Coffee concludes after an analysis of Aldrich's observations,²⁸ that it was rarely played as a simple pincé (Table II, example 3), but in conjunction with the port-de-voix (see Table II, p.20).

In general, most of the crosses found in the editions of this era are to be interpreted as some member of the trill family. Couperin believes the trill to be in three parts: the appoggiatura beginning the trill, the oscillation, and the concluding figure.²⁹

Hotteterre asserts that the trill should begin without hurry, the opening appoggiatura being held one-half the value of the note trilled. Proposed by Aldrich, Coffee gives the following rules as trills are to be applied:

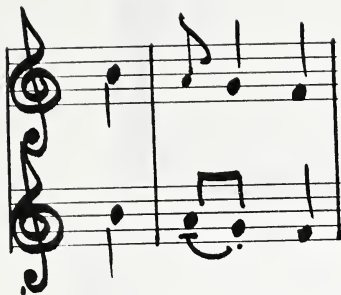
- (1) When the melody descends from any note to a longer note which in the descending scale, is the second note of a semitone or the note immediately below the second note of a semitone. But if the long note in

27 Jacques Hotteterre, Principes de la Flûte Traversière, ou Flûte d'Allemagne, (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1707, Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1973), pp.21 and 22.

28 The Principal Agreements of the 17th and 18th Centuries; a study in Musical Ornamentation, Putnam Aldrich, quoted by Coffee, "The Sonatas," pp.70 and 71.

29 Couperin, L'Art de toucher le Clavecin, p.24.

TABLE II

BASIC ORNAMENTS

as written

descending appoggiatura proper
also called coulé, port-de-voix

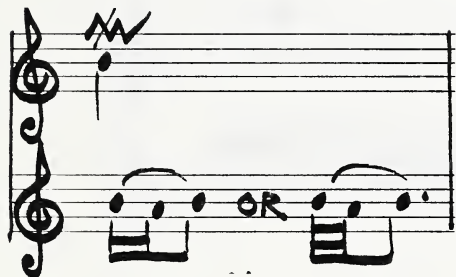
as performed



as written

ascending appoggiatura proper
also called coulé, port-de-voix

as performed



as written

mordent, pincé, pincement
Oscillations vary according
to the note fingered and
length of note.

as performed



as written

roulade (double appoggiatura)

as performed

TABLE II

BASIC ORNAMENTS (Continued)

as written

cadence avec appuyé

as performed

as written

as performed

simple, on-the-beat, upper note trill
 Oscillations may vary according to the note fingered, the length of the note, and the mood and tempo of the piece.

as written

on-the-beat trill with
concluding figure

as performed

as written

full cadential trill
with upper-note pre-
paration, oscillation,
and concluding figure

as performed

Couperin has provided a more detailed ornamental analysis (see Table III, p.22).

TABLE III

Explication des Agréments et des Signes de Couperin

The image displays 24 musical examples of ornaments and signs from François Couperin's 'L'Art de toucher le Clavecin'. Each example consists of a musical staff with a specific ornament or sign indicated by a symbol above the staff, and a label below the staff.

- Pincé-simple**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Pincé-double**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Port de voix simple**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Port de voix double**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Port de voix coulée**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tremblement appuyé, et lié**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tremblement ouvert**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tremblement fermé**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tremblement lié sans être appuyé**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tremblement détaché**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Accent**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Arpègement, en montant**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Arpègement, en descendant**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Coulée, dont les points marquent que la seconde note de chaque tems doit être plus appuyée**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Pincés diésés, et bémolisés**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Pincé continu**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tremblement continu**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tierce coulée, en montant**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Tierce coulée, en descendant**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Aspiration**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Suspension**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Double**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.
- Unisson**: A single eighth note with a 'P' symbol above it.

François Couperin, *L'Art de toucher le Clavecin*,
Paris, 1716, ed. of 1717, trans. and ed. by Mevany
Roberts (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1961).

question is followed by a still longer note, the cadence should be deferred until the latter, unless the latter be the final note of the phrase;

- (2) on a long note preceded by a shorter note at the same pitch if, in the descending scale, it is the second note of a semitone or the note just below the second note of a semitone;
- (3) on every dotted note from which the melody descends;
- (4) on the penultimate note of every final cadence in which the last note descends one degree;
and
- (5) the cadence avec appuyé may be introduced whenever the melody descends in notes of equal value to a note which is the lower note of a semitone, or a note immediately below the lower note of a semitone.³⁰

The oscillation is judged by the tempo and nature of the work. Conclusions of trills are also considered within the scope of tempo and mood.

Entrées, préludes, and other slow movements tend to feature ornaments with careful and elaborate structures, and endings are often written out. Faster movements see ornaments quickly resolved, and it is each performer's dexterity and agility that determines their resolution. Individual taste and temperament too will provide a guide for the realisation of ornaments.

30 Coffee, "The Sonatas," p.82.

Of the appoggiature there are two forms: that which is found one scale step above the principal note, articulated by a slur; and the port-de-voix, found also by a scale degree, but just below the principal note with the same articulation³¹ (see Table II, p.20).

Quantz states that the appoggiatura from above should be strongly marked, more so than the resolution note.³² Melodically important, it receives half the value of the preceding note, and if that note is dotted, it is given two-thirds of its value.

The port-de-voix served as a connective device between two principal melodic notes within a phrase, introduced when the melody rises in conjunction from a short to a long value, and when the final cadence has the last note approached from below by a quarter note lesser value. The port-de-voix was found on strong beats of a bar.³³

Those who perform the music of this age must approach the subject of vibrato with some care. While most players today seek to incorporate vibrato into the fabric of tone production (particularly with regard to the realisation of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century litera-

31 Ibid., p.125.


32 Quantz, Essay, VIII, p.92.

33 Coffee, "The Sonatas," p.82.

ture), the attitude of composers and players of the eighteenth century was remarkably different. For them, vibrato was treated as an ornamental device.

The flattement, a rapid alternation of strong and weak tone colours was achieved by "trilling" a finger-hole two or more places below the principal note. In acoustic terms, this is the flattening and the restoring of the end of the wave-form of a particular note. The flattement is accomplished easily upon the simpler flutes of the eighteenth century, and in many cases can be realised upon the Boehm system as well. Not considering the flattement a textural necessity, Corrette remarks,

This agrément is extremely touching in tender pieces on long notes. It is only rarely indicated.³⁴

Hotteterre indicated the flattement with a wavy line () , often misinterpreted by flautists today who play a trill or mordent. Corrette thought that diaphragmatic vibrato (produced by many players today) was the least satisfactory method of producing vibrato.³⁵

An ornament such as the coulé (coulade) has no specific rhythmic identity and borrows its time from the principal note, slurred to the note of resolution.³⁶

34 Corrette, Méthode, p.30.

35 Ibid.

36 Donington, Early Music, p.268.

The coulé moves in one direction only, but ornaments such as the roulade or port-de-voix double may move in more than one direction³⁷ (see Table II, p.20).

Finally, Quantz writes,

These ornaments contribute, according to the nature of the piece, to its enlivenment and joyfulness...³⁸

37 Ibid., p.215 ff.
See also
Coffee, "The Sonatas," p.128.

38 Quantz, Essay, p.172.

DYNAMICS

Contrast of light and dark is a fundamental element of the visual arts. In discussions of music it is interesting to note the various visually oriented terms that are employed to explain acoustic phenomena. "Shading," "light" and "dark" timbres, and "colour" are visual words applied to "sound-as-tone." Dynamic contrast seems to have its origin in Italy³⁹ and these contrasts are spoken of in visual terms:

...one must proceed as in painting, where so-called mezza-tinte or half tinte, by which the dark is imperceptibly joined to the light, are⁴⁰ employed to express light and shadow...

Quantz gives specific rules for dynamic practice:

- (1) accented passing notes should be played a little louder and longer than the notes preceding and following them;
- (2) in quick movements long notes must be stressed by swelling and diminishing the volume of the tone;
- (3) a long note interrupting quick motion must be stressed; in the notes that follow, the volume may again be moderated;

39 Donington, Early Music, p.482 ff.

40 Quantz, Essay, p.172.

- (4) one should use forte and piano levels to vary repeats; and,
- (5) one should use a diminuendo, or an embellished fermata.⁴¹

For those performers schooled solely in the practice of the "terraced dynamic," the above proposals would have seemed something of a surprise. This "terracing" comes from the construction principles of Baroque organs, and harpsichords.⁴² Should a performer wish a change in colour, volume and register, the required hand or leg stop was employed until a suitable gap in the work could allow further change.

String and wind instruments were dynamically much more fluent, however, and could exploit their capabilities beyond the plateau-style dynamic practice. Quantz, a flautist, was acutely aware of the resources of the flute, and he pressed for dynamic elasticity:

There are also many more degrees of moderation between the Fortissimo and the Pianissimo than can be expressed by words; these degrees must be executed with great discretion, and can only be learned through feeling and judgement from the execution of a good soloist.⁴³

41 Quantz, Essay, pp.173-178.

42 Donington, Early Music, p.482.

43 Quantz, Essay, p.275.

GALANT RHYTHMIC PRACTICE

The practical applications of rhythms (like those of ornaments) in certain cases lie beyond the written medium. The galant or rococo style depends heavily on the employment of notes inégales, a departure from the indicated rhythm, and Quantz is quite explicit about the lengths of notes actually played:

If demisemiquavers follow a long note and a short rest, they must be played very rapidly, both in the Adagio and in the Allegro. Hence, before playing the quick notes, you must wait to the very end of the time reserved for them, so that you do not lose the beat.⁴⁴

The method of exaggerating the written measure of the rhythmic figure became a hallmark of the ouverture style:

Majesty is represented both with long notes during which the other parts have quick motion, and with dotted notes. The dotted notes must be attacked sharply, and must be executed in a lively fashion. The dots are held long, and⁴⁵ the following notes are made very short...

and

44 Ibid., p.226.

45 Ibid., p.133.

...the dotted crotchets in the loure, sarabande, courante, and chaconne must not be played with their literal value, but must be executed in a very short and sharp manner. The dotted note is played with emphasis, and the bow is detached during the dot. All dotted notes are treated in the same manner if time allows; and if three or more demisemiquavers follow a dot or a rest, they are not always played with their literal value, especially in slow pieces, but are executed at the extreme end of time allotted to them, and with the greatest possible speed, as is frequently the case in overtures, entrées and furies.⁴⁶

The process of applying notes inégales is extended into the realm of faster movement, and Quantz has been quick to point out that the practice must be held in accordance with the expressive context of the movement:

Gaiety is represented with short notes--quavers, semiquavers, or in alla breve time, crotchets, according to the requirements of the metre--which move both by leap and step; it is expressed by lively tonguing;

Boldness is represented with notes the second or third of which is dotted, and, in consequence, in which the first is precipitated;

Flattery is expressed with slurred notes that ascend or descend by step, and also with syncopated notes, in which the first half of the note must be sounded softly, and the⁴⁷ second reinforced by chest and lip action.

46 Ibid., pp.290 and 291.

47 Ibid., pp.133 and 134.

Although different composers have given quite detailed analyses of rhythmic interpretations, the final result sometimes still seems to be a matter of individual preference. Quantz writes that much rhythmic practice

...cannot ⁴⁸actually be fixed with complete exactness.

The one consistent element that gives music of this period its flavour, that of altering the dotted figures by both free and mathematical proportions, was known to the authors and players as pointer, a term known to the modern performer and scholar as "double-" or "over-dotting." Herein lies another problem for the modern performer-- the interpretation of the rhythm as it is given, graphically, on paper. Donington has observed that

...when the dotted notes (i) (in a movement) are persistent enough to dominate the rhythm; or (ii) form a distinct rhythmic figure or formula; or more generally (iii) would sound sluggish if taken literally: then it was the convention to crispen them (Fr. pointer) by lengthening the dot, thereby ⁴⁹delaying and shortening the note after the dot.

There is reason to believe that sophisticated alterations of written rhythms was not solely a French tradition. C.P.E. Bach writes:

The short notes following dotted notes are ⁵⁰always shorter than their written length.

48 Ibid., p.67.

49 Donington, Early Music, p.441.

50 C.P.E. Bach, Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments, trans. and ed. by W.J. Mitchell, (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1949), p.157.

He continues,

Since a proper accuracy is often lacking in the notation of dotted notes, a general rule of performance has become established which nevertheless shows many exceptions. According to this rule, the notes following the dot are to be performed with the greatest rapidity, and this is frequently the case.⁵¹

Bach is careful about the possibility of overplaying the device and says,

But sometimes notes in the remaining parts, against which these have to come in, are so distributed that a modification of the rule is needed. Or again, a feeling of smoothness which would be disturbed by the inevitably challenging effect of dotted notes compels the performer to shorten the dotted note slightly. Thus if only one kind of interpretation is used as a starting point for performance, the other kinds will be lacking.⁵²

Quantz's observations about the inability to fix accurately certain performing attitudes to paper are indeed astute, for in our own time, the expressive strength of music has shattered the boundaries of the traditional notational system. The designs of the composer and/or performer today are more fully realised by approaches other than through the written note; free improvisation, action through verbal direction, graphic suggestion and environmental and media interplay spur the creative music process.

The sensitive players of the galant era in their

51 Bach, Essay, ed. of 1762, as quoted by Donington, Early Music, p.443.

52 Ibid.

unique way no doubt surpassed the written medium, the state-of-the-art being still too crude to instill and maintain the life and spirit of galant sentiment.

Like the ornamental signs, rhythmic notation must be viewed less as an absolute command, and more as a hint. Furthermore, in attempting to recreate the sound and mood of the galant style (original instruments notwithstanding), the modern performer would be well advised to search out as many points of view, discussions and conclusions about rhythm and other related issues as possible.⁵³

No other issue seems to be so hotly contested as the subject of the notes inégales. To whatever form or degree the player invites inequality and rhythmic alteration must ultimately depend upon the context of the work, admittedly an often difficult observation. The successful performance of virtually every traditionally notated work (in any style) has always involved that flexibility that makes an equal value unequal, a dotted note overdotted, and the authority to keep the flow of the music fluid and

53 Articles dealing with performance practice of the eighteenth-century, including the concepts of inequality and dotting have best been addressed by Frederick Neumann and Robert Donington, duelists on the matter for some time. See

Frederick Neumann, "The French Inégales, Quantz and Bach," Journal of the American Musicological Society, XVIII (1965), pp.313-358, and Donington's reply in JAMS XIX (1966), pp.112-114; see Neumann's reaction in JAMS XIX (1966), pp.435-439; and further comments and analyses in JAMS XX (1967), pp.473-485.

flexible. Failure to take into account the principles of the notes inégales to some degree or another will only leave the listener with a performance that is both sluggish and lifeless.

MICHEL BLAVET (1700-1768)

Blavet, born of humble stock, seems to have been self-taught in music. Yet, by the age of twenty-three, the young Blavet became associated with the entourage of Duke Charles-Eugène Levis. Although Blavet was proficient in a number of instruments, he became a virtuoso flautist, and it is for his compositions involving the flute that he is best remembered.¹

In 1726 Blavet first appeared at the Concert Spirituel, the hub of chic Parisian musical life, and he shared the stage with the finest players of the day, including the premier violinist-composer Jean-Marie Leclair, l'ainé.²

In 1731, Blavet declined the invitation to join the Prussian court of Frederick the Great (a position filled by Quantz), but rather offered his services to the Court of Clermont. This lifetime post did not prevent Blavet from attaining an unrivalled place in the concert circles

1 Zaslaw, "Michel Blavet," New Grove, II, pp.787.

2 Ibid.

of Paris.

Blavet held principal chairs in the Musique du Roi (1738) and at the Opéra (1740), and he performed more frequently at the Concert Spirituel than any other player.³

Blavet's interests included opera, and he composed four works for the stage: Floriane, a comédie-ballet; Les jeux olympiques, a ballet héroïque; La fête de Cythère, an opera; and Le jaloux corrigé, an intermezzo with a divertissement written in collaboration with Pergolesi, Galuppi, and other luminaries.

Blavet's contribution to the new Italianate style saw the abandonment of the arioso recitative, which had been in constant use since Lully's time.⁴

Blavet's interest in instruction encompassed students at all levels of ability, and his Récueils de Pièces (1750) are written for teacher and student in progressive duets.⁵ His concern in teaching was reflected in his Op.II, in which he carefully marked the phrases and breath-points by indicating "H" (haleine).⁶

3 Ibid., p.787. The most detailed information on Blavet's career is to be found in

Constant, Histoire du Concert Spirituel, and Zaslav, "Michel Blavet," New Grove, II, pp.787 and 788.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Michel Blavet, Sechs Sonaten für Flöte und Klavier Op.II, ed. by Willy Müller, (Heidelberg: Süddeutscher Musikverlag, 1969).

Blavet enjoyed a consistently long, prosperous, and happy career, dying in Paris in October, 1768. His death, with a personal tribute "Éloge de M. Blavet," was recorded by M. François de Neuf-Château in the Nécrologe des hommes célèbres (Paris, 1770).⁷

Blavet's set of six sonatas for flute and bass Op.II, was first published in Paris by the author in 1732.⁸ The standard edition of these works is by Willy Müller, and it is upon this edition that the following discussion is based.

7 Zaslav, "Michel Blavet," New Grove, II, p.787.

8 For locations of this edition see

Einzeldrucke vor 1800, [RISM], Series A, Vol.I, Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1971, p.326.
Surprisingly, John Walsh did not follow with an English edition of the same set.

OVERALL STRUCTURE

The sonata is a well-balanced four-movement work in the tempo order slow-fast-slow-fast. The opening movement, a prelude marked Adagio, is a through-composed movement which shows an affinity for the earlier tradition of fantasia-like motion and mood. The following Allegro is quick and sprightly, hints at an earlier dance form, and is presented in binary structure. The next movement, the core of this sonata, is comprised of two inner rondeaux, each of which Blavet titled Aria. Both these arias are considered as one movement subject to modal alteration. The picturesque heading of this movement, "L'Henriette," is applied to the Op.II, No.1 work in general. Within the sonata, however, the title "L'Henriette" belongs to the matched arias proper. The final movement, Presto, like the Allegro, is also a binary structure; it implies a dance form and moves along at a brisk, animated pace.

HARMONIC STYLE

Blavet's harmonic style throughout the sonata is consistent with the practice of his time. Harmonies of the Rococo style, like those of earlier dance forms are uncomplicated, and in this particular work, primary triads in root position and first inversion make up much of the harmonic resources. Secondary triads are held in reserve for sequential and modulatory duties. The unstable second inversion triad and the diminished chord are employed sparingly throughout the sonata.

MELODIC CONSTRUCTION

Blavet has divided his melodic writing into two distinct manners: melodic style that is intrinsically ornamental; and melodic style that is lean, sparse, and devoid of integral ornamentation.

In the first style, passages made up of dotted figures, triplets, appoggiature, trills (both in linking and cadential roles), present the player with a dense forest of ornamental figuration. Repeated notes and scales (diatonic and chromatic) are featured. As will be seen, writing of this kind is kept to slower movements; the limitations of the flute of this era require a slow tempo for the effective realisation of the delicate, but dense filigree.

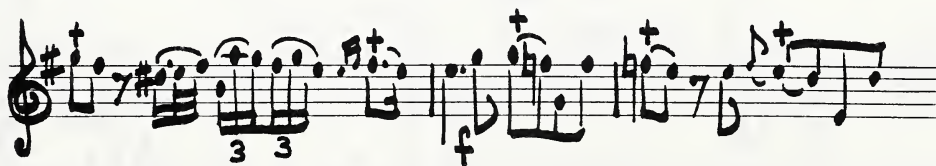
The second approach, applied chiefly to movements of moderate to fast tempos features melodies moving by conjunct motion and arpeggiated triads. Rhythmic pulse is provided by streams of eighth-notes and smaller subdivisions of the beat. Sequences too, are frequently employed. In such melodic writing, the challenge to the player demands his parting from the written line, treating it as a suggestion for the embellishment and "fleshing-out" of the melody each time a section is repeated.

ADAGIO

The opening movement reflects the Italian influence upon the French style. The shape of the melodic line, the layout of the phrases, and their overall length are akin to the Opus 5 sonatas by Corelli,⁹ rather than to those elements featuring the earlier French ouverture style.

Marked Adagio, this through-composed entrée shows allegiance to the improvisatory character of prelude style. Closer examination of the movement however, shows Blavet's melodic design carefully arranged in two-bar phrases throughout the movement. The dense, intrinsically ornamented prelude presents the player with the opportunity to further embellish the movement by interpreting the cross (+) at various points throughout (see example 1).

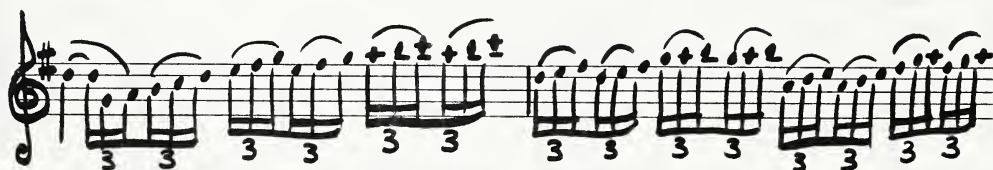
Ex. 1: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Adagio, bars 10 ff.



⁹ Coffee, "The Sonatas," p.19.

Modulation patterns adhere to the diatonic progression of the circle-of-fifths. Keys are often established by the employment of sequences. The manneristic sixteenth-note triplet, another common expression of the era used here in sequence, flourished within this charming entrée (see example 2).

Ex. 2: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Adagio, bars 15, 16.



The spice of Blavet's harmonic language is found in his alteration of the major-minor mode, exploited for its colouristic characteristics (see example 3).

Ex. 3: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Adagio, bars 19-21.

Additional harmonic interest is provided by the tense diminished triad resulting from melodic voice-leading (see example 4).

Ex. 4: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Adagio, bars 12-15.

The musical score for Example 4 consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains bars 12 and 13, and the second system contains bars 14 and 15. The music is written for piano (p) and features a complex melodic line in the right hand and a dense, rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings. The left hand accompaniment is particularly dense, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and includes several triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The right hand melody is more melodic, with some grace notes and slurs. The overall texture is complex and rhythmic.

The final cadence is a model of galant rie, the progression moving from II_5^6-V-I , with the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ inserted prior to the dominant (see example 5).

Ex. 5: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Adagio, bars 21,22.



The texture remains transparent throughout, and although there exists some imitation between the principal voice and bass, the movement is homophonic in nature. Its primary function is to display the expressive capabilities of the soloist. The slow tempo marking of this entr e mesur e helps to set a mood of tranquility which, in spite of occasional rhapsodic forays remains intact.

ALLEGRO

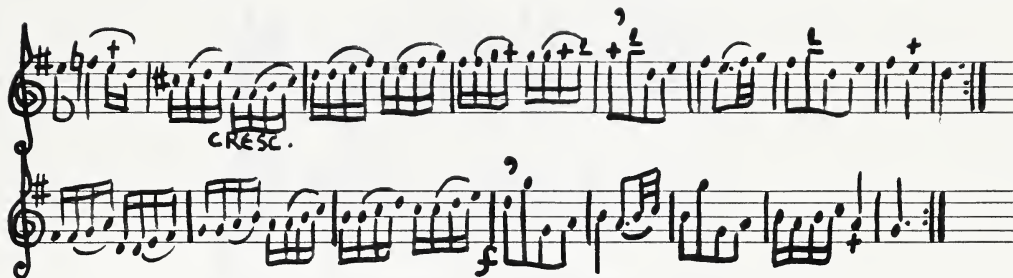
Like all the other second movements of Blavet's flute works, this movement is in a fast tempo and in binary form. The material presented at the beginning of the movement is mirrored at the opening of the second section, but in the dominant key (see example 6).

Ex. 6: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Allegro, bars 1-4, 33-36.



Subdivided ascending figures in the first section turn the course of the music toward the dominant; the second section is given a similar subdivided passage which steers the movement back to the tonic (see example 7).

Ex. 7: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Allegro,
bars 26-32, 78-85.



The second section is almost twice as long as the first, the original material undergoing substantial transformation similar to Classical developmental practices. Both sections are repeated. The preparatory anacrusis identifies the movement's allemande ancestry.¹⁰

Though the harmonic language of the dance form is not complex, the need for harmonic tension in this "allemande" has not been overlooked. Blavet favours the suspension, including 9-8, 7-6, and the most commonly employed 4-3 (see example 8).

¹⁰ Coffee, "The Sonatas," p.28.

Ex. 8: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Allegro, bars 23, 24.



Blavet has employed the $\frac{6}{4}$ triad within his device of modal alteration (see example 9).

Ex. 9: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Allegro, bars 74-78.

To avoid parallel octaves, Blavet introduces an unorthodox harmonic procedure preventing their occurrence. The suspended seventh must seek resolution by ascending motion (see example 10).

Ex. 10: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Allegro, bars 17, 18.



Apart from this unusual harmonic procedure, further treatment of dissonance within this movement follows accepted diatonic principles.

The richly decorative melodic line that is associated with the style régence would, at first glance seem to be absent from the Allegro. The tune itself is composed of conjunct motion and arpeggiated triads. The primary motoric element of the Allegro is a stream of running eighth-notes in descending order that breaks into a sequential passage of ascending sixteenth-notes toward the end of both sections. It is this subdivision of the eighth-note that gives the melody added thrust, and, supported by the fast moving bass line, the melody quickly gains momentum as it moves to the cadence at the end of each section.

But it is this seemingly barren, and at first sight,

uncharacteristically unadorned melody that is the challenge for the galant player. Played literally, the simple, sparse tune can quickly turn to pedantry. To preserve both the formal balance of the Allegro at the double-bar, and to continue melodic interest, embellishment of the existing melody is required. Movements like this "allemande" press upon the performer the demands of taste and style in order to provide the listener with the fullest realisation of a skeletal melodic suggestion.¹¹

¹¹ Quantz, Essay, XII, p.134.

"L'HENRIETTE"

This inner movement, the core of the work, consists of a matched pair of larger sections titled Aria, each of which is constructed in rondeau form (ABACA). This structure stems from the operatic practices of Lully, the popular chanson, and earlier instrumental dance music.¹² The second part of the movement is presented in the tonic minor--an approximate mirror structurally, metrically, melodically, and in agreement harmonically with the first part. The actual length of each section is much the same, and the modulation plan is also roughly parallel. Both first sections begin and end in the tonic. The second section of each part starts in the home key and moves to conclude in the dominant. The C sections are both subdominant zones. The first part begins this section in the supertonic and moves to the mediant. The second aria begins the same section in its respective subdominant, but here the progressions are more intense; fragments of the melody push the progression along by sequential motion through brief areas

12 Donald Jay Grout, A Short History of Opera (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), pp.121 and 122.

of mediant, subdominant, and dominant keys that lead back to the refrain.

At the conclusion of the second aria, there is a da capo al prima (marked in the Müller edition as Folgt Aria I^a). The overall design of the movement is similar to the Italian da capo aria, and may be viewed as a rondeau bound by a larger, external ternary form:

A	B	A
First part, G major (<u>Aria I</u>)	Second part, G minor (<u>Aria II</u>)	First part, <u>da capo</u> (<u>Aria I</u>)
A B A C A	a b a c a (D E D F D)	A B A C A

First inversion triads keep the melody buoyant and moving (see example 11).

Ex. 11: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1,
"L'Henriette," Aria I, bars 14-16.



The diminished chord is again produced to supply smooth voice-leading, and is not used as a dramatic device (see example 12):

Ex. 12: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1,
"L'Henriette," Aria I, bars 2-4.



Examination of the melodies involving the two parts that make up the whole of the movement reveal a striking similarity in construction. Small, graceful arches built upon a series of ascending and descending scale-steps provide the main material for both arias. Sparingly ornamented, the lilting melodies are reminiscent of a Corellian pastorale. The Italianate label Aria is an apt one for each of the two major parts; the melody suggests a singing quality not unlike the true vocal arias of this era. The tessitura of the accompanimental part is quite high, bringing the two voices of the melody and bass close together in a manner both delicate, and intimate. The supporting harmony offered by the bass line, in spite of the closeness

to the melody, remains unobtrusive, and does not attempt to compete with the flute part.

The maintenance of dialogue is of prime importance here, for the transparent texture may easily be destroyed. The uninitiated accompanist may well attempt to over-realise the continuo part which moves by parallel sixths in many places. Should the accompanist also employ techniques foreign to the style, the net result could be a texture far too dense and murky for a work that demands the brightest and most delicate presence of the melody and bass part (see example 13).

Ex. 13: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1,
"L'Henriette," Aria I, bars 33-36.



PRESTO

The Italian tempo indication is not a label that readily informs the players of the real character of the movement. The peculiar rhythmic bounce and melodic motion of the Presto belong to the gigue.

The ancestor of this dance stemming from the British Isles is found in both simple and compound metres.¹³ The Op.II, No.1 Presto contains both rhythmic styles.

Blavet has not entirely abandoned the older French gigue style with its emphasis on motivic development, coupled with textural and rhythmic complexity. Italian interests are present in the Presto as well. Blavet is careful not to cloud the melody with dense contrapuntal writing. It is his treatment of the two-part texture that bears testimony to his pursuit of les goûts-réunis; the thin textural format is not entirely homophonic, having some elements of contrapuntal application present. The opening statement is constructed canonically, but the canon is quickly abandoned in order that the buoyant triplet figures may be presented in sharp relief.

13 Little, "Gigue," New Grove, VII, pp.368-371.

Both melodic and harmonic materials are subjected to the transformations typical of a binary movement from this period. Like the Allegro, the Presto contains a second part that is nearly twice the length of the first. The original dance tune is broken into melodic fragments and motives which are then grouped into larger segments and treated with the familiar modulatory device of the sequence. At no instance throughout this movement does the harmonic blueprint stray from the traditional modulation plan, and all harmonic applications remain unproblematic. The mild instability of the $\frac{6}{3}$ chord helps motivate the melodic voice, and acts as a discreet support for the melody.

The strangest element of the melody in the Presto lies not in its pitch class, but rather within its rhythmic structure. Generally speaking, it is the pitch class that is Blavet's major concern when writing out the melody. Indeed, the common concern of the composers of this era for melodic composition lay in whether or not melodies could be constructed in such a manner as to express a singing, tuneful character. In this Presto, however, the compositional priority is markedly different. Greater attention is paid to the rhythmic element of melodic composition. Initial study suggests the employment of the older fragment-expansion technique, but the melodic fragments are extended just enough to offer a phrase structure of four and eight bars. Melodic development is achieved through sophisticated

metric manipulation. The $\frac{3}{4}$ metre moves handily from a subdivision of one beat to the bar to nine ($\frac{9}{8}$) (see example 14).

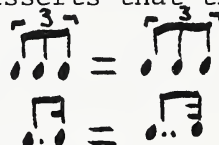
Ex. 14: Sonata in G major, Op.II, No.1, Presto, bars 58-62.

C.P.E. Bach's practices differ substantially from Blavet's. Bach prefers to "iron-out" the metric irregularities. The dotted rhythms are to be played the same way as the majority of the triplet figures where $\text{dotted eighth} = \text{triplet eighth}$ ¹⁴

¹⁴ Bach, Essay, p.160.

It would seem an odd compositional practice to write out significant metric differences only to ignore them in performance. Blavet likely intends these contrasts to act as a propellant to the music; otherwise uniform rhythm is perhaps not enough to sustain interest in the gigue.

Quantz supports Blavet's methods, and asserts that the dotted rhythm should stand out, where



15

BLAVET'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ART

The compositions that Blavet has left us require from both scholar and performer, a thorough grasp of instrumental technique. Upon the first reading of Blavet's works, players may find themselves quite surprised at the degree of proficiency needed just to play through the pieces. Blavet's superlative mastery of the flute won him unanimous praise from the greatest names of his time. Ancelet, Quantz, Telemann, Voltaire, and others spoke of his brilliance of tone and technique, affirming that Blavet set the standard in flute playing for all Europe.¹⁶

That Blavet possessed extraordinary talent may be made more clear when one realises that the flute of Blavet's time hardly compares with the instrument with which we are familiar today (see plates 1 and 2, pp.59 and 60.)¹⁷

The illustrated model for the eighteenth-century features a wooden, conical bore construction with no embouchure plate, a single D-sharp key, and open holes. This design severely limits the possibilities of playing in keys

16 Zaslaw, "Michel Blavet," New Grove, II, p.787.

17 Nancy Toff, The Development of the Modern Flute, (New York: Taplinger Pub. Co., 1979), pp.21 and 153.

PLATE I
QUANTZ FLUTE

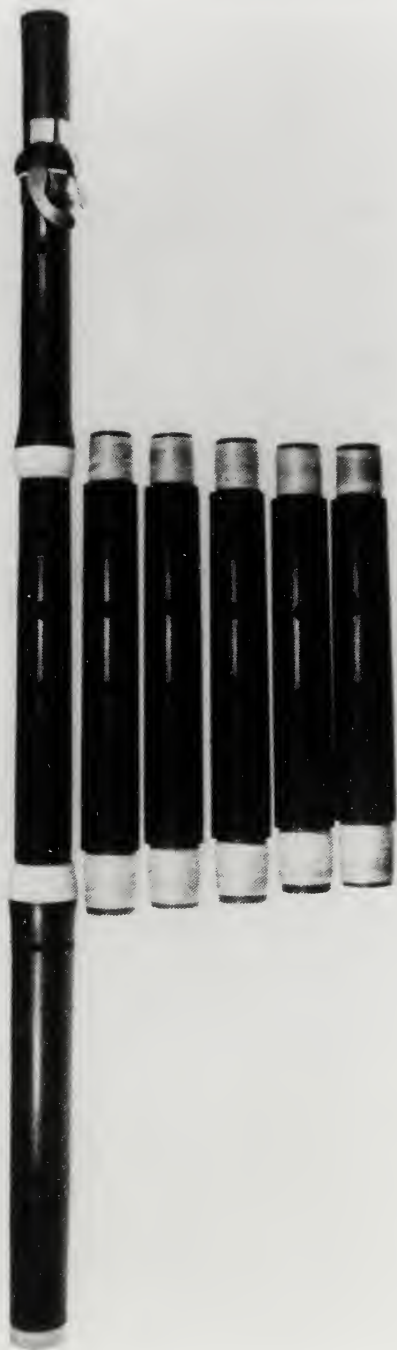


Fig. 8. QUANTZ 2-KEYED FLUTE. Johann Joachim Quantz, Potsdam, ca. 1750. Ebony, with silver keys and ivory rings. 6 upper body joints (*corps de réchange*), numbered with notches on end of each joint. Length 636, 641, 650, 658, 664, or 672 mm. Quantz's tuning slide. This flute was made for Frederick the Great. (DCM 916)

PLATE II

MURRAY FLUTE



Fig. 120. MURRAY FLUTE.
W. T. Armstrong Co., Elkhart, Indiana, 1974.
(Photo by Laura Santi)

other than those which are closely related to D major--the fundamental, and natural key of the flutes of the Rococo. Notes outside the D harmonic series tend to be rather weak and out of tune. Difficult cross-fingerings and blowing techniques described by Quantz in great detail serve only to illustrate the limited harmonic scope of these flutes. The degree of difficulty in simply fingering certain notes, coupled with the diminution of strength, clarity, and accuracy of pitch will be proportional to the distance modulated away from the natural key of these flutes.

Flat keys were generally avoided by composers when writing for these instruments. Where the necessity of writing in a flat key becomes unavoidable, slow passage work to facilitate the fingering was employed. The lowest register was used only sparingly, as the construction of the bore made the emission of the lowest register of the flute a difficult task. Blavet shows no hesitation in using the flute in difficult keys where the player is forced to tackle certain problems of pitch and fingering. Although Blavet has restricted his writing in flat keys within this sonata to the second aria of "L'Henriette," the motion within this minor rondeau is highly subdivided and requires a fine order of technical facility.

The eighteenth-century instrument also requires the avoidance of ornaments upon certain notes, again due to

difficulty of fingering and inaccuracy of pitch. Blavet ignores the problem, however, and an abundance of ornaments is to be found throughout the sonata upon the second register C, a particularly awkward note both to sound and to trill upon with accuracy. Blavet also frequently employs the lowest note of the eighteenth-century flute--D above middle C. To be able to emit such a note in spite of the bore construction shows that Blavet had considerable strength of embouchure and precision of air direction.

The virtuosi of every age often prove to be the gauge by which style is measured. What we remember to be quint-essentially Baroque seems eternally bound with J.S. Bach, the Classical Age with Mozart, the Romantics with Beethoven, Chopin, and the like--all virtuosi in their own times. Our own era recognises the standards of style set by the gifted players; Charlie Parker will likely remain the measure of Bop, and Elvis Presley the measure of Rock'n'Roll.

Insofar as the galant era is concerned, admittedly it is the virtuoso/composer François Couperin who is best remembered. His works, although representative of an age considered by some to be effete, shallow, and decadent, still show a superbly crafted and style-conscious manner. For the clavecinist in particular, Couperin is the apex of his age. For the flautist the apotheosis of the style régence is surely Blavet. Like Couperin, Blavet sought a

perfect art--the successful synthesis of French and Italian styles. Although "L'Henriette," and the other sonatas contained in his Op.II collection are a less "modern" effort than those of his Op.III, they show the successful evolution from the older style to the goûts-réunis.¹⁸ There is no stiff mannerism of the court dance in "L'Henriette," nor in any other work by Blavet; it is the near artless indulgence of the dialogue that we enjoy. Blavet cannot be regarded as merely one composer amidst a crowd writing in the fashion of the day, but rather as one representative of the highest technical and artistic standards set during his time.

Yet, for all of this, Blavet continues to be ignored, and is almost unknown even among serious flute students today. The problem lies with Blavet's place in history.

Composers from ages of transition, like the galant era, tend to be lost in the analyses and discussions of style where either

- (a) the transitional era is regarded as only the "tail-end" of the major age under discussion, and is seen as an expression of the final degree to which the greater stylistic age may evolve, or where;
- (b) the transitional era is regarded as only a forerunner leading up to the greater stylistic age under discussion.

Blavet's works (and indeed those of his worthier

18 Zaslaw, "Michel Blavet," New Grove, II, p.787.

contemporaries) tend to be swamped--lost amidst the vast sea of analyses and re-examination of the Baroque. Admittedly, Blavet's works are few, and cater to a select community. Furthermore, the study of Blavet and the style galant are hampered by those academic institutions whose needs bind them to the broader aspects of stylistic instruction. The student performers and scholars within these institutions are liable to overlook, in the course of their studies, those fascinating tidal pools and transitions between the major trends and times.

To discover the music of Michel Blavet is to discover what is galant, Rococo, or style régence. If Blavet's works are to be brought into greater light, then the greater pooling of the resources of the performer, writing in co-operation with the scholar must be sought. Without this co-operation, the assumption made by many players will be to continually categorise Blavet's music--that of the style galant--with the Baroque or Classical eras, and the flavour of an age will be lost.

The net result of the failure to pursue an understanding of this era is much akin to observing a Watteau. We shall be able only to glimpse darkly, and from afar, those scenes of casual and yet studied leisure, unable to quite grasp the air and flavour of those "fêtes galantes."

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